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ABSTRACT

Abstracts of 72 articles selected from "Teaching at a Distance," numbers 1-24, are provided in this bibliography, which was prepared for an international conference held in Cambridge, England, in September 1983. The following topics related to distance education and counseling at Great Britain's Open University are covered: (1) general theory of counseling from the Open University perspective; (2) the Open University tutor-counselor; (3) Open University post-foundation counseling; (4) adult learners; (5) Open University student progress, withdrawal, and drop-out; (6) disabled students; (7) Open University remote students; (8) study skills; (9) study centers; (10) preparatory courses; (11) Open University continuing education; (12) advisory-referral services; (13) vocational guidance; (14) Open University briefing and training; and (15) comparative and international considerations. (MES)

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COUNSELLING IN TEACHING AT A DISTANCE

Selected and Abstracted from "Teaching at a Distance"

by Michael G. Moore

Associate editor.

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COUNSELLING IN TEACHING AT A DISTANCE

A bibliography of articles

PREFACE

A conference was held in Cambridge on September 20th-22nd, 1983, on the subject of counselling in distance education. It was organised by the Open University Regional Academic Services in conjunction with the International Council for Distance Education, and persons came from more than a dozen countries.

The bibliography which follows was prepared as a contribution to the conference. It consists of a selection of articles from "Teaching at a Distance" numbers 1 - 24, on counselling and subjects pertaining to counselling which I thought would interest participants at the conference.

It has been suggested that the bibliography might be useful for a wider readership, and I am grateful to the R.A.S. Research Group for reprographing and distributing it. I am grateful also to Jo Matthews of R.A.S. for her typing.

I would like to emphasise one thing. When I prepared these abstracts I had not expected them to appear in print, but rather to be a working document for the conference. While I took reasonable care, I did not have the abstracts approved by authors of articles, so if authors feel I have misrepresented them, I would be grateful for (I hope friendly) correction, in case I decide to develop the work any further.

In the meantime I hope what I have written is good enough for you to place alongside your 24 copies of Teaching at a Distance and use it as a key to the contents of those volumes.

Michael Moore

October, 1983.

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(A)

GENERAL THEORY OF COUNSELLING FROM THE OPEN UNIVERSITY PERSPECTIVE

Bernard Harrison: The teaching-learning relationship in correspondence tuition (No.1)

Bernard Harrison has the privilege of being first to articulate a number of themes which have been raised over and over again in the 23 subsequent issues of the journal and stating the underlying assumption that

"independent, self-directed, critical thinking is a precious quality in ourselves and in our students, and is to be encouraged at all times".

In 1974 decision had been taken to merge the previously separate functions of tutor and counsellor - at foundation level - and Harrison's reference to this includes a view of counselling:

"a good counsellor has never separated his supportive/advisory/pastoral relationship from his interest in what is being learned. The new arrangement will provide, at least at foundation level, an inbuilt stimulus for the tutor to be more sensitive to the local and personal needs of his student and for the counsellor to employ the politics of effective teaching - for example to provide challenge as part of the help that he offers".

Most students spend their first few weeks on the course seeking advice from tutors, counsellors and each other on 'how they should write an essay'. Most of the Harrison article is then a discussion of the Open University's expectations of its students' essays, and as such deals more with tutoring than counselling - uncomfortable though it is to make such a distinction.

Alan Berkeley Thomas: Success and failure in Open University Counselling (No.1)

Reports the results of a study of O.U. counselling undertaken in 1973 in which the performance of successful counsellors is compared with unsuccessful.

Original definition of the counsellor's role was a personal advisor on a whole range of matters which a student might face in the course of his studies. These might include the business of organizing study time and approaching study techniques, the implications of course choice, difficulties over fee payment, personal problems and so on.

In his study Thomas interviewed an experienced Senior Counsellor from each of the University's 12 (1973) regions and asked for descriptions of the behaviour which characterised those counsellors considered "satisfactory" and those who were "unsatisfactory". After acknowledging the methodological weaknesses in his research design, Thomas reports fourteen characteristic counselling activities.

This 13 page article is taken up almost completely with quotations from Senior Counsellors which amplify and illustrate the meaning of these 14 characteristics.

Andrew Northedge: How many counsellor characteristics? (No.3)

Criticizes the quality and the range of activities which were listed in the Thomas study and argues there was need to organise and condense it, to provide a simple mental picture of the job against which it would be possible to compare one's actual performance, and check that the main requirements of the counselling job are being met. Some of Thomas' characteristic counselling activities are not activities, but rather general approaches, attitudes or personality characteristics which are either present or not,(though they can be looked for at the time of selecting the counsellor).

Most of them can be seen as elements of two main counselling roles both of which can be consciously developed by the counsellor. The first of these is that of the CARING SUPPORTER. This involves a general style of behaviour which is both sympathetic and empathetic towards students. It implies being outgoing, relaxed and informal so that contact can be made at a level which will permit personal revelations where these are relevant. The other major role is that of "efficient manager". Here, rather than a relaxed style of behaviour, an active work-seeking style is required. This involves seeking out and tackling the problems of individual students, keeping informed of the progress of students, and paying attention to study centre organization. Since these two roles require different styles of behaviour, it requires a degree of conscious effort to ensure that both are adequately executed.

John Davison: Educational Counselling in Academic Studies (No.3)

An essay that advocates counselling as a distinct component of a teaching system. Within the norms and structures of conventional teaching situations the counsellor is cast in the role of auxiliary. He is accepted as a provider of useful techniques with which to cope with disadvantage, handicap or failure but his pre-occupation with the abnormal tends to weaken his impact with the pedagogical mainstream on issues such as relevance of study material, over specialisation, subject isolation etc.

If there is a role for educational counselling that is not confined to welfare and the abnormal then it is necessary to disperse the miasma of assumed consensus and to assert the tendency to divergence between learner's expectations and teacher's provision. There is need to replace the idea of teaching supplemented by counselling of a merely remedial kind. This is especially the case in teaching at a distance. Educational technology optimises the use of specialised knowledge and skill; at the same time it maximises the distance between teacher and learner and weakens the traditional framework of interpersonal exchange. Without some countervailing force, making for vigorous and critical response from learners, a technological system of teaching becomes preoccupied with exposition and comprehension. One consequence of this is a bias toward cognitive objectives at the expense of the affective.

Counselling is therefore essentially concerned with a true balance of objectives, with a meaningful integration of communicable knowledge with the felt needs of learners. Its exponents can make no claim to have discovered the necessity for such a balance, for it is present to some degree in all teaching and learning systems. The counsellor's existence rests on the claim that the balance has been distorted by traditional methods. The present opportunity is an historical situation where educational provision now reaches larger numbers over greater distances.

Nigel Nicholson: Counselling the Adult Learner in the Open University (No.8)

The student problems that are relevant to counsellors are described under the headings: deficits in skills, role conflicts, motivational problems, problems of emotional adjustment and problems of identity and personal development. After being considered separately they are then presented in an integrated summary form in terms of sequential stages in the development of relations between individual and institution (following a model developed by Tavistock theorists J.M.M. Hill and E.L. Trist). Three principal stages are identified: induction crisis, differential transit, and settled connection. The problems of the student, and the counsellor's response, at each stage are dealt with. In the author's view there are marked discrepancies between the role prescribed for the O.U. counsellor and the actual role, and the main problems faced by the counsellor are discussed under the headings: counsellor as teacher, counsellor as counsellor, counsellor as bureaucrat. The critical relevance of the advisory service for applicants to the O.U. appears to have been widely under-rated and an opportunity has been missed to use it as a genuine commencement to student involvement in adult education by establishing relationships and orientations at an early stage. A more integral and institutionalized link between the advisory service and the provision of preparatory courses would also be beneficial.

Ormond Simpson
Learning to Listen (No. 10)

There seems to be only one key skill to whatever roles you ascribe to tutor counsellors. It is the skill of listening. A two hour briefing-training session was used to see if people could be helped to listen more carefully. Two interviews between tutor-counsellor and students were acted out to show that the vital element in the advice-giving role is good listening. In groups of three participants practised listening, and it is hoped to run more sessions and to assess the results.

George Watts: Personal Counselling in the O.U. (No.15)

The boundary between academic counselling and counselling of a more personal kind is hard to define in practice. Do personal relationships form part of the tutor-counsellor's professional role? Is the counselling process in the O.U. something other than the provision of administrative, educational and academic support? Personal counselling is "the provision of support to people whose difficulties are of an affective or emotional kind". The article distinguishes between administrative, educational, personal and crisis counselling. Experience suggests in each year one in ten students receives personal counselling and one in two hundred some form of "crisis counselling" - counselling of persons who are depressed, violent or suicidal. Most students deal with emotional difficulties and critical situations in the context of their ordinary lives, but some expect O.U. staff, particularly those called counsellors, to have some expertise in advising students how to cope with such problems. Tutor-counsellors are not chosen for their qualities as personal counsellors. Some may be natural personal counsellors, but others not. Some make themselves available, others do not. Where does the student turn to, and where does the tutor-counsellor turn to when a personal problem becomes too complex and challenging for a friendly coping amateur? One approach might be to appoint one of the counselling team at the study centre as a supportive counsellor for the rest. At the 'crisis' level, the University might have to employ a small number of professionals on a full time or consultancy basis.

David Sewart: Distance Teaching: A Contradiction in Terms (No.19)

The success of the O.U. does not rest wholly or entirely on the highly structured teaching package, but on the inter-relationship of that package with the student through the agency of the counselling and tuition functions peculiar to the O.U. The advice/support function cannot be supplied through the teaching package, but as it is a vital element in the system, we can consider other ways in which it might be supplied. Since advice/support depends on interaction it is difficult by telephone, and more difficult in print, radio and television. The standard teaching package cannot provide an individualized learning system for students. This can be done by correspondence - and even better face-to-face. Such support is provided by the tutor-counsellors at the study centres - a place where students are weaned from the traditional methods of face-to-face group teaching to the Open University's methods of individual and independent study - an important place for most new students in the painful early steps of adapting to learning at a distance, but also important for many students in later stages of their study.

Stephen Brookfield: Independent Learners and Correspondence Students (No.22)

In recent years two broad schools of research and theory have emerged, both of which have contributed to our understanding of what it means to learn independently. On the one hand writers like Moore, Wedemeyer and Holmberg have attempted to conceptualize the relationship between distance education and independent learning, while others, notably Tough and Penland have researched self directed learning outside formal adult education classes. Moore has presented a fusion of these two strands of research in a tentative theory of independent study. In an attempt to test and explore this relationship, the author investigated the learning activities of a group of self-directed, and a group of correspondence students. He reports the origins of their learning, the problems they encountered, the resources they used, and the effect of spouse support, or opposition. The implications of this research include an advocacy of self-directed learning in higher education, in the form of open learning and flexi-study systems, which have increased learner autonomy without a consequent loss in dialogue.

Diane Bailey: Samuel Smiles revisited: helping yourself in the Open University (No.23)

Samuel Smiles' best selling book "Self Help" was published in 1859, and sold over 250,000 copies, mostly to working men. It encapsulated the spirit of Victorian individualism, Protestant self-discipline and limited unthreatening initiative. The concept of self help is fundamental to adult education, but Smiles' rationale of self-help as personal promotion within a relatively fixed and unchallenged system conflicts in many ways with the concept of self-help appropriate to an open and student centred learning system. The characteristics of self-help activity in the O.U. include peer group support, continuity, peer tutoring, agency and instrumentality, a pooling of expertise, a model of democratic discourse, and collaborative learning. Self-help is therefore shown to be - in ideology and method - very different from its Victorian ancestry.

(B)

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY TUTOR-COUNSELLOR

Robert Beevers: The function of the part-time academic staff in the Open University teaching system (No.3)

From the start, the Open University counsellor helps students to relate the necessarily diverse and potentially disparate elements of the University's teaching system, and to ARTICULATE THEM TO HIS PERSONAL NEEDS AND LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS.

The counsellor's role rests essentially on the proposition that the O.U. student needs an advisor, easily accessible to him personally to whom he can turn for help over a range of needs extending beyond the promise of a particular course. There was argument in 1973-4 whether one person can carry out the two roles of personal counsellor and course tutor. Beevers gives the then V.C's summary of the argument. The problem is partly logistical, but primarily educational.

The 1974 compromise is to have a tutor-counsellor at foundation level, but "The debate will continue". Whatever the outcome the student will need an academic mentor whose work is predicated on him rather than on the course material; in other words someone not unlike the present counsellor.

Jack Field: Tutor-counsellor Evaluation: a preliminary note (No.12)

A survey of more than 5000 students and nearly 2000 tutor-counsellors asked: Did tutor-counsellors and students prefer the tutor-counsellor system or the pre-1976 system when counselling and tutoring were separate. Students with foundation course experience of both systems preferred the new one as did most tutor-counsellors. Most post-foundation students preferred the old "counsellor only" system. A selection of reasons for the preferences of various sub-groups of students and the tutor-counsellors are given.

Penny Henderson: The tutor-counsellor role: a case study (No.14)

An account of the interactions, communications, relationship of one tutor-counsellor and one student in one year.

Pat Rickwood: Perceptions of the Tutor-Counsellor Role (No.17)

There are three different perceptions of the tutor-counsellor's role, that of the University, that of the tutor-counsellor, and that of the student. The University expects tutor-counsellors to know course material, to be able to develop students' study skills, and to be able to counsel adult learners. Tutor-counsellors can feel a conflict between the desire to help their students and the demand for achieving standard levels of competence, and experience difficulties arising from personal styles of teaching as well as their isolation from other parts of the University system. Only a few students feel they need counselling, and the majority see the emphasis placed on this function as a waste of valuable time. Students look on the tutor-counsellor instrumentally - "Can he help me pass the course?" This is because most students are motivated to earn a degree, and this motivation is reinforced by the pressure of the assessment system.

Judith Fage: A Counsellor's View of Tutors (No.18)

Tutor-counsellors receive copies of grades and comments written by higher level tutors to their students. From these, impressions are formed about the tutors. Examples are given of ways in which the tutor-counsellor might intervene in the light of these comments, and the kinds of response she gets.

(C)

OPEN UNIVERSITY POST-FOUNDATION COUNSELLING

Ron Cook: Counselling Continuity and the Committed Tutor-Counsellor (No.9)

A continuing relationship between a student and counsellor is not only personally and educationally constructive, it is also efficient and cheap. The O.U. interferes with this continuity, in particular by re-allocating the student taking a second foundation course to a new tutor-counsellor. The benefits of continuity are outlined. The implications for University administration are listed.

Where the course is taught by course units...the scope for creativity in teaching is very limited. In the long term the only satisfying and creative part of the tutor-counsellors work is his relationship with his students - we need to do far more than at present to preserve and develop that part of the tutor-counsellor's role.

Ormond Simpson: Post Foundation Counselling (No.9)

Eight of the eleven post-foundation counsellors working in one study centre were interviewed about their views and their methods of counselling. 95 student record files were analysed also, and students' views were sought by interview and questionnaire. Counsellors showed divergence of opinion about their roles as post-foundation counsellors, and many found it difficult to say exactly what their role was. In practice there were two approaches the "G.P. counsellor" who assumes the student in need will let his need be known, and the "interventionist" who more actively initiates contact with students. All counsellors agreed that the better a counsellor knows the student, the more satisfaction each gains from the contact. Students were also unsure of their counsellor's function, but 93% said they liked their counsellor to take a personal interest in their progress. Most students are very reluctant to approach a counsellor for a closer relationship and the onus must be on the counsellor. Counsellors should be encouraged to adopt a more active role - to lean towards the "interventionist" school rather than the 'surgery'. Three recommendations are made to the University aimed at strengthening post-foundation counselling, and some advice is given to the counsellor for improving his post-foundation counselling.

Ronnie Carr: Post Foundation Counselling Revisited (No.24)

The author and Ailsa Peck carried out a survey of 27 tutor-counsellors, 100 post-foundation counsellors, and 800 students. They found that a major gap exists between what the University believes is desirable and what happens in practice in counselling post-foundation students. There is a much lower level of contact among tutor-counsellors, tutors and students than the official guidelines suggest, and the contacts which took place were often considered of little value. There is uncertainty among the part-time staff about the relationship between tutors and tutor-counsellors, and diverse opinions about the tutor-counsellor's role among students and tutor-counsellors themselves. Some specific findings were: Almost half (48%) of the students claimed to have had no contact with their tutor-counsellor over the academic year, and almost 90% had three contacts or less. 26% tutors had no contact with tutor-counsellors, 55% had three or fewer, and 15% had ten or more. Half the tutor-counsellors claimed to have contacted all their post-foundation students, but this often consisted of only an introductory letter.

(D)

ADULT LEARNERS

Mike Redmond: Aspects of Adult Learning (No.8)

An ongoing concern for all students which is not subject or course based, is a distinctive feature of the O.U. system. The onus is on tutor-counsellors to initiate contact with students for whom they are responsible, unlike other forms of counselling where students are expected to present themselves when experiencing difficulty. The concerns of adult learners which O.U. counsellors must be prepared to help with include the insecurity which accompanies initiation into new educational settings, fear of exposing difficulties with study, difficulty in incorporating study into the overall life pattern, and the special needs of working class students who must learn new ways of communicating and relating to other people, and those women who experience role conflict between study and domestic life. The varied needs of adult learners require careful diagnosis and skilled counselling support which might have to be sustained over a long period. An effective response depends on knowing the whole person, not just in the student role but also in his world outside the University. Such knowledge is essential in mediating between the student and the University and providing relevant support and guidance at crucial stages in the student's career.

Liz Taylor, Alistair Morgan and Graham Gibbs: The orientation of O.U. foundation students to their studies (No.20)

The term orientation describes all those attitudes, aims and expectations that express the student's individual relationship with a course and with the University. Four main types of orientation are identified: vocational, academic, personal, and social. Within these main types exist sub-groups consisting of persons having an intrinsic interest in the course, and those with an extrinsic interest. A study of orientation can throw light on drop-out, and suggest possible solutions. The orientations of 29 D101 students were studied. The most prevalent type of orientation was the Personal, in which two sub groups were identified: Compensation and Broadening. The former were students who want to make up for being deprived in the past, the latter want to make more of their lives. Vocational orientation was less prevalent than Personal. It included persons hoping to get a job, a change in career, or to become better in an existing job. Any particular student's orientation is a complex mixture of two or more orientational types. Compared with data from a study at a conventional university, the striking difference is the personal orientation of the O.U. students, with the conventional students being more academically oriented. Students with different orientations will want different things out of a course, and so will approach study in different ways.

Ken Giles and Paula Allman: The cognitive development of adults (No.20)

Recent improvements in research design make it possible to separate true developmental changes in adulthood from changes which are simply artifacts of experience or sample composition. As a result the picture that is emerging is quite different from the previous one of linear irreversible decline in cognitive abilities with age. The new picture is called 'plasticity' because the pattern of growth seems to undulate, with increases in cognitive performance occurring on different occasions through the life span.

Christine and Anthony Russell: "Dear tutor...dear student" (No.21)

The article examines some of the ways in which O.U. students present themselves to tutors so as to get taken up, or "sponsored" by them. Sponsorship is the process by which one individual seeks to promote another, who is seeking promotion, within an organisation. As lecturers in higher education the authors were familiar with this process in the face-to-face context. Teaching at a distance means relationships at a distance, and they were able to point to a similar pattern of sponsorship approaches as a result of study of both written and telephoned communications as well as study centre contacts with O.U. students. These approaches are summarised as (i) keen, hardworking, academically worthy; (ii) companion, mate, good chap; (iii) social equal; (iv) fellow competitor - 'let's beat the system together'; (v) worshipper 'you have such a lot to teach me'; (vi) dependent 'I owe everything to you, and you are kind and clever'.

Ken Giles and Paula Allman: Cognitive development and personal change in adults (No.22)

Some people, drawing for instance on Erikson would say a developmental perspective on personal change is not new; therefore we must stress that a different view lies in using a cognitive perspective in looking at personal change. Where Piaget explained cognitive development in childhood in terms of assimilation and accommodation, mature thought should be described in terms of contradictory logic - the implication that a thing has a given quality and at the same time does not have that quality. The development of dialectic thought is an attribute of adulthood. The development of the person - development of self - is potentially dialectic, and without exposure to contradiction there may well be no possibility for development. Personal change, as defined, is a process in which the individual gains power or greater control over his or her interaction with experience. However unintentional change could lead initially to loss of power over the directions and goals the individual values. This highlights the importance in the O.U. context of counselling.

David Freestone: The Sense of Learning Competence Inventory (No. 23)

The SLCI consists of forty statements each of which subjects rank order on a five point scale according to their feelings of competence or incompetence. In 1982 the SLCI was administered to 25 O.U. students at the beginning and end of the 1982 academic year. For the group as a whole only three scales were of significance:planning - there was a decrease in students feeling of competence in planning; writing and note-taking - there was a decrease in feeling of competence; meeting academic requirements - there was an increase in feelings of competence.

The results of the analysis cannot be extrapolated beyond the actual students concerned, but the SLCI may be of value in suggesting areas which may require remedial action.

Nigel Cuxress, Val Morrison and Fiona Palmer: The Older Open University Student (No.24)

The O.U. has some 2,700 older students - defined as aged sixty or over, and this is 90% of older students studying in higher education in the U.K. Data received from a survey of 1042 students and compared with a younger group, shows O.U. older students to be better educated on entry than the national norm, to contain a disproportionate number of men, and to have continued learning in various ways throughout their lives. Half the older students undertook no formal study as preparation for the O.U. and 65% had no admissions counselling. Most enjoyed O.U. study. They studied 2-3 hours a day and worried about memorising, coping with the pace of study, and examinations and assessment. Higher percentages of older students are found in Arts courses, particularly the history/ religious/beliefs areas. There is only a slight difference in pass rates between older students and the O.U. average, and the 61-65 age group has the best pass rate of all (67.8% compared with average 63.8%).

(E)

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENT PROGRESS, WITHDRAWAL AND DROP-OUT

David Kennedy and Richard Powell: Student Progress and Withdrawal in the O.U. (No.7)

Two hundred counsellors in the Northern and Yorkshire Regions returned forms to report on 684 students who withdrew entirely and 291 who partially withdrew from O.U. studies in 1974. They also reported on 236 students who were identified as being "at risk". This article sets out to develop a way of thinking about the question of drop-out, trying to give some idea as to why people enrol in part-time education, and then drop-out.

Account must be taken of two general aspects of the phenomenon of drop-out: the characteristics of students and their circumstances.

The individual part-time student has a difficult time in maintaining an equilibrium of pressures within his life, pressures arising from his job, from his domestic situation, from his academic work and also from possible variations in his own personality. If one or more pressures increase unduly, the equilibrium is upset and the student may become "at risk".

Given knowledge of a student's predominant characteristics and a particular set of circumstances a counsellor can develop insight into the conflict of pressures that the student is trying to resolve.

The article examines in detail the characteristics of motivation, adult developmental stages, previous educational background and educational self concept to show their effect on drop-out.

Pauline Kirk: The Tip of the Iceberg: Some Effects of Open University Study on Married Students (No.10)

The domestic problems of home based study for both sexes are an important cause of student withdrawal. Undertaking part-time University study often necessitates some readjustment of family life, and for a small number of students the stress causes great bitterness, in some cases ending in desertion and divorce, and the cases we know about might represent only 'the tip of the iceberg'. The article is based on an analysis of some forty letters, a number of telephone calls, and discussion. Two different patterns of domestic problem resulting from O.U. study are detected. Where an uneasy marital relationship existed before enrolment, study brings to light tensions always present but previously ignored or accepted. Where the marital relationship is described as a happy one, enrolling with the O.U. sometimes causes unexpected trouble; stresses imposed on a normally ordered routine by study periods, cut-off dates, exams, broadcast times and so on lead to resentment from the family and a feeling of guilt in the student which may be increased by love for the partner. For virtually all students some domestic problems are inevitable. Even if he, or she, has the most understanding of families, the study environment of a part-time mature student can never be as easy as that of a younger full time student with fewer responsibilities. Perhaps what underlies many grievances is the development of the personality which accompanies study, and the threat this poses to the partner's ego. Practical measures the O.U. could take to minimise these tensions include: giving prospective students more warning of what they are taking on; more intensive interviewing of applicants; briefing tutor-counsellors about domestic problems and how to deal with them; increased counselling of higher level students; involve families in study centre activities. The special problems of finance and summer school attendance are discussed.

Mary Thorpe: The Student Special Support Scheme: A Report (No.15)

A report of the 1977 O.U. project to provide additional tutoring and counselling to any new students needing it. Over 60% of all tutor-counsellors returned report forms on this work. In 1977, 5467 students and 1195 tutor-counsellors participated in the scheme. Tables show educational and occupational characteristics of students who received special support, their demographic characteristics, educational qualifications, and course results. Attitudes and views of senior counsellors and tutor-counsellors are reported. The conclusion is that "tutor-counsellors do intervene successfully in the process of student learning; this intervention operates not only to consolidate individual motivation to become an effective student, but also creates the context which some individuals need to develop motivation and ability to study".

Ronnie Carr and Frank Ledwith: Helping Disadvantaged Students (No.18)

The article looks at the progress of the intake of students in 1977 noted as "disadvantaged" by the O.U. Regional Advisory Service in Scotland, and at a number of demographic factors which might predict failure to obtain a credit. Questionnaires were sent to 442 disadvantaged students and their tutor-counsellors. Students' progress and the difficulties they experienced, are reported.

Patrick Kelly, Jeremy Millard, Ormond Simpson: Regional Workshop on Student Progress and Drop-out (No.22)

The Workshop considered papers and reports on the problem of drop-out, by Woodley - setting the scene by outlining the nature of the problem and some of the causes; Simpson - describing his Region's counselling approach to slow-moving students; Millard, reporting the results of a survey of the action taken by tutors on behalf of potential drop-outs; Cutress comparing success rates between different faculties and among students of different educational backgrounds; Inman discussing correlations between achievement and completing pre-requisite courses and attendance at day schools. Suggestions were made for Regional action in future.

Anne Gaskell and Ormond Simpson: Slow Moving Students - a report to tutor-counsellors (No.22)

180 students, or 8% of all students at four study centres were identified as "slow-moving". Records and reports were analysed to determine suitable counselling action, and to identify some of the reasons for lack of progress. Ten specific conclusions about slow moving students are arrived at, with the general conclusions being (1) Most slow moving students have genuine problems which can be overcome by good counselling, (2) For the remainder, the problem is one of motivation, and the only way to deal with them is to help them understand their motivations, and to progress,or drop-out constructively in light of that understanding.

Alan Woodley: Why they declined the offer (No.23)

Based on a postal survey of 2611 persons who, offered a place in the O.U., declined the offer. Thirteen reasons for this are listed, ranging from the most frequent "Could not afford" (28%) and "Summer School attendance impossible" (26%) to "Become likely to become unemployed" and "Have to do other study now as part of job" (10% each). The various reasons are broken down by Region, sex, age, occupation, course and educational qualifications.

Alan Woodley and Malcolm Parlett: Student Drop-out (No.24)

The authors review and discuss the data on drop-out gathered over more than ten years' work in the O.U. In 1982, nearly 3 out of every 10 new students did not finally register; 1 in 4 finally registered students did not sit any final exam; 1 in 17 of those who sat a final exam did not gain a credit; 3 out of 10 finally registered students gained no course credit. These data are compared with those of distance teaching institutions in Canada, U.S.A., Norway and West Germany. O.U. drop-out data are analysed by level of course and faculty and for each year between 1971 and 1982. The results of various studies seeking to answer the question "why do students drop-out?" are given under the headings: Course factors; study environment factors; motivational factors; other factors. The demographic characteristics of drop-outs are presented, covering the following factors: sex, age, previous education, occupation, region, the number of credits already earned, the year of entry, the student's workload, whether prerequisite courses had been followed, whether the student went from foundation to third level course. Courses with higher drop out rates are those without a summer school, half credit courses, inter-faculty courses, those with high student enrolment, older courses, and those with fewer radio and T.V. programmes. Some of the ways in which the drop-out problem can be attacked include: more and better admissions counselling, increased and pro-active tuition and counselling during the course; more and quicker feedback on assignments; higher quality courses aimed at engaging the student to a greater extent; a shift in the balance of central academic staff attention from course production to presentation.

(F)

DISABLED STUDENTS

Vida Carver: Educational problems of hearing impaired students (No.8)

The article examines some of the effects of impaired hearing on learning and makes suggestions for identifying and alleviating them. The essential beginning to helping deaf students, both those who declare their disability and those who do not, is to obtain a personal interview to ascertain the nature of the individual's particular impairment and to offer help in a way that makes it clear that it is simply part of the tuition and counselling service which exists to adapt the system to the particular needs of any student, handicapped or not.

Some general guidelines for talking to deaf persons are given and students should be made aware of the advantages to be derived from informing the University of their special needs; there may be a case for advising some applicants to seek further preparation before registration; students should be urged to take part in all the opportunities the O.U. provides for discussion.

It is important to work out the best possible study centre communication system for each individual. A good reception at the study centre is important. Some of the educational difficulties which are a direct consequence of hearing impairement are described and explained. These are associated with the lower level of linguistic skills of these students, but because of the individual nature of each student's problems, no rule of thumb prescriptions are possible. In commenting, we need not fight shy of "hard" words as we might with a child, but we should strive to keep language structures simple. Model structures are valuable, as are frequent references back to texts for the rereading of key passages. To sustain the dialogue a few questions might be asked at the end of each assignment, for answering at the beginning of the next. This sort of personal attention is particularly valuable for students who often feel intellectually isolated.

Geoffrey Tudor: The Study Problems of Disabled Students in the O.U. (No.9)

About one student in fifty has a disability serious enough to impede study. The O.U. from its inception, set out to accommodate the special needs of disabled students. To help disabled students study efficiently, contributions are often needed from outside the University. Local authority help may be required to obtain an item of equipment; special advice about a mental disorder might be needed. The Open University's own contribution has included: an advisory service for applicants; a counselling service; special study-efficiency courses; the provision of special equipment; providing opportunities for group discussion; making special arrangements for summer schools and examinations. Many O.U. teaching materials and learning systems are adapted to meet the study needs of disabled students. The article discusses in particular arrangements for visually-handicapped and the deaf, and the special arrangements made to deal with assignments and examinations.

Ron Cook: Letters from Disabled Students (No.11)

Four letters typify the problems of disabled students. One is blind, another immobile, the third deaf, and the fourth was in hospital after suffering a coronary thrombosis. In general, the disabled share the difficulties of O.U. students: finance, isolated learning, motivation and finding the time for study. Because they are less affluent, less mobile, less robust and less confident that employers will give them career opportunities on graduation, these difficulties affect them more acutely.

Richard Tomlinson: The Development of Services for Disabled Students at the O.U. (No.16)

This is a follow up to Tudor's article in No.9. Services for the disabled have been reorganized into eight programme areas: Publicity and enquiry; disabled students records system; services to students (such as producing special materials, publishing a Newsletter, and summer school support); an advisory service to regions; advisory service to faculties; liaison with other sections of the University; external liaison; and research and development. Services in each area are described, and there is comment on the possibilities for further development.

Moreen Docherty: A Case Study of Student Progress (No.18)

Illustrates the counsellor's work, describing the interactions with one particular disadvantaged and disabled student during his foundation year.

Fiona Palmer: Seriously Stressed Students (No.22)

In the London Region in 1980, 42 students were registered as disabled by severe stress. Six students declared schizophrenia, ten depression, and nineteen a phobia. (There was too little information on the other seven to include them in the study). The article provides brief reports of counsellor-student interactions and reports the academic results of these students. Whereas the depressive and schizophrenic students only passed 28% of courses, the phobic group passed 82.5% of the courses for which they were registered - a significantly higher pass (and distinction) rate than the student average.

Tom Vincent: Home computing for the visually handicapped (No.23)

In 1980, as part of the Open University's "Microcomputers and teaching" research programme, a project was initiated called 'Computer Assisted Learning for Blind Students' with the objectives to ensure that any software or system that was developed would be made available to the blind, and to modify existing software for use by the blind. To achieve these objectives it was decided to use a low cost microcomputer and speech synthesizer. It was predicted that developments in microelectronics would lead to single chip speech synthesizers at low cost, and this has subsequently proved to be correct. The article describes the principles of synthetic speech; some of the practical problems. The early trials in which the first software was developed was an advanced scientific calculator program. Later the development of a BASIC interpreter allows the visually handicapped to write computer programs, and also allows computer programs either for screen or printer output to be run without modification and to provide speech output automatically.

(G)

OPEN UNIVERSITY REMOTE STUDENTS

Linda Sissons: Regional Provision for Remote Students in Scotland (No.9)

Some students - at least 300 in Scotland - live so far from a study centre they cannot attend an evening meeting without an overnight stay. These remote students have little or no face to face contact with tutors and other students. Being remote they suffer other disadvantages e.g. fewer bookshops, libraries, telephones, or BBC 2 television reception. Scottish provision features a system of location counsellors - people with a counselling only function who act as counsellor for all local students - and a telephone voucher scheme to encourage telephone tutorials.

Mary Rattray: Self help in a remote area: a student viewpoint (No.21)

During 1982 a group of Scottish students set up a group to support students isolated in the Scottish islands. The activities are described in a letter from one member.

(H)

STUDY SKILLS

Graham Gibbs and Andrew Northedge: Learning to Study - A Student Centred Approach (No.8)

How does one set about the task of helping students improve their approach to studying? In practice, presenting students with well polished and self-contained models of 'good' study habits may not be an effective way of bringing about improvements, since the models presented may not represent realistic alternatives for many students. The gap between existing ideas and the recommendations may be too great.

An alternative approach might be to take students' existing study habits as the starting point from which new skills may be developed. Is it not possible that students are quite capable of analysing for themselves the shortcomings of their own study habits? Can they not select and experiment with suitable alternatives in such a way that the new approaches are assimilated within existing patterns of study, taking just those aspects of the alternatives which are personally relevant and rejecting the rest?

What role is there for a teacher in such a self directed approach? Possibly he should act somewhat in the manner of a 'client centred' psychotherapist or a 'non directive' encounter group leader...to act as a catalyst in helping to draw out, examine, and reorganise the study processes already used by the students.

The article reports on the authors' experiences in running groups based on this theoretical approach, including examples of the structure and procedures followed in groups learning about note-taking and essay writing.

Roger Lewis: Study Skills in a New Foundation Course in Technology (No.18)

Writing a new O.U. foundation course in Technology was seen as an opportunity for teaching study skills linked to the subject content. The course team interwove advice, practice and worked examples into the mainstream text. It was decided to isolate and emphasize the activities involved in studying so that tutors and students could bring them into awareness. For example the study notes for one Block includes three possible ways of organizing material for the essay required in that Block, and the student is asked to use one of these approaches. This new approach to teaching study skills is discussed with reference to recent literature on study skills and counselling.

(I)

STUDY CENTRES

Pauline Kirk: Study Centres: Some Impressions (No.16)

There are certain characteristics common to 'successful' study centres: (1) Students feel sufficiently attracted to attend regularly, (2) a significant number of them take part in self-help groups and to make use of the facilities provided, (3) out of this a sense of identity develops, and it becomes a social as well as an academic meeting place; (4) there is a feeling of busyness and well-used facilities most evenings. How can an unprepossessing set of rooms and a noticeboard be turned into a thriving study centre? A great deal depends on the initiative and determination of the local tutor-counsellor. If sessions are helpful and stimulating and the manner welcoming, foundation students will express their appreciation by attending as regularly as they can. There is a direct correlation between frequent attendance at this level and a willingness to come to continuing students' evenings later. Some things a tutor-counsellor can do to make the centre more attractive are: write an introductory letter, and send letters to remind students about meetings; encourage group viewing of television programmes or tapes; arrange for informal meetings over coffee; arrange for occasional outside speakers

Michael Bradford: Study Centres: The Background to the Current Policy Review (No.16)

Although it is not, as originally expected, the only centre for the student, offering all the academic and technical resources he might need outside the home, the study centre is still the key to the regional system, the most promising location for support. Each student remains connected with the local study centre for his undergraduate career since the tutor-counsellor who taught at foundation level is the counsellor throughout. The future role of the study centre in the advisory and induction phases, in counselling and in foundation level tuition seems assured. How can it be made successful? There are two principal considerations. The first is the role of the tutor-counsellor. The extra trouble taken by some to welcome, first, applicants to advisory sessions, then students through induction, to the early tuition and counselling meetings is the most important single factor in establishing the study centre in the student's mind. The second lies in the nature of the institution where the study centre is housed. Open University is client centred and its study centres are best located in institutions which have a similar view. In such places - usually the F.E. Colleges - the study centre represents not so much the exploitation of plant as an educational partnership in which the O.U. has effectively merged with further education.

(J)

PREPARATORY COURSES

Dan Anderson
What Kinds of Open University Preparatory Courses? (No. 4)

The OU should recognize the obligations which go with the media exposure we get compared with other adult education institutions. If only three out of five applicants go on to take a foundation course, we should offer far more than we do at present to those to whom openness means merely a right to fail. The best solution might be the NEC type 'return to learning' course, but many applicants have no time for such a broad, leisurely range of courses. We need the facility to diagnose precise areas of strength or weakness relevant to the intended area of study. Ways of doing this is a major research and development role for the OU. We are also in a good position to help a national adult education advisory service get off the ground. We can contribute to the range of available study materials, and can make a major contribution to teacher training in the adult education field.

Richard Freeman
Preparation for the Open University (No. 4)

So many would-be students do not know what they want, the adult education world must provide courses which help them explore their aspirations, needs and abilities. For the OU to run its own preparatory courses would be inimical to adult education, as they would channel students into OU foundation courses although it would be better if they were farmed out into alternative educational experiences. The OU should support preparatory course providers like the National Extension College who will serve those who do not apply to the OU as well as those who do. Local colleges should also be encouraged in this direction.

Michael Richardson
Who are Preparatory Studies For? (No. 4)

Many who enquire of the OU are undertaking a very broad educational enquiry which should perhaps lead them into pathways other than the OU. There is a case for collaboration with the outside providers who offer preparatory courses. This rests in particular on the data now available regarding the previous educational backgrounds of applicants, which shows that the proportion of applicants with less than 2 'A' levels increased from 29% in 1971 to 42% in 1976. Some initiatives in the preparatory area are: the production of the publication 'Open University Preparatory Study'; the production of regional booklets and provision of regional conferences; special programmes on radio and television; the development of study skills packages; subject-specific preparatory materials; an enhanced Advisory Service for Applicants. Within the 'preparatory' area, a collaborative rationalization of activity and information would be welcome.

Geraldine Peacock, Susan Hurley, Jonathan Brown: New Opportunities for Women: A Group Entry Project at Newcastle Upon Tyne (No.12)

"Group entry" to the O.U. provides a valuable system of support for the unqualified. This article describes the progress of a group of eighteen students who had followed a New Opportunities for Women course - designed for women who want to return to education and/or work - and been accepted, as a group, into the O.U. The group entry scheme was approved by the O.U. for one year. The educational qualifications and demographic data of the students and attitudes to study are reported and compared with other women entrants.

During the course of the year the performance and reactions of the two groups were monitored and compared. Attendance of the new group at tutorials was better than the control group, and drop-out was significantly lower. Various reasons for these results are suggested, and it is pointed out that the special interest group used the University's counselling facilities more freely than the other group.

The final examination, taken by 14 of the original group of 18, was passed by 13, one with distinction, and the 14th gained a resit.

H. Cowper, S. Cowper and K, Logue; S. Herman and P. Herman: OU/WEA Preparatory Courses (No.14)

Experiences from Scotland and the North West of England of collaboration to provide preparatory courses to O.U. enrollees. Some of the lessons learned are: the need to stress the importance of essay writing; the importance of having O.U. tutors teaching the preparatory course; linking the course to the study of a particular subject. The benefits to the two organisations, and problems are mentioned.

David Sewart: A new look at the preparation of O.U. students (No.15)

Although the early plans for the O.U. include many references to preparatory courses, it is only now, when the major objective of the production of a series of courses to form an undergraduate profile is in sight, that the University has been able to concentrate more fully on the much more difficult task of providing an individual support service for students which will embrace *inter alia*, advice and preparation. The nature and extent of the advice and preparation that can be offered is influenced by the operational system for admission. From 1980 onwards the O.U. will operate a new undergraduate admissions system which will enable the new intake of students to be identified before other institutions begin the summer vacation. The University will offer a broadly based enquiry service to persons making an initial approach, and hopes to establish links with local Adult Education Advisory Services. When people apply they will rapidly receive an offer of a course, and it is hoped preparatory materials will be provided for all students which is self diagnostic and also is mainly course-specific. These materials will be produced through course teams; collaboration will be sought with institutions which will provide evening classes and other forms of support to complement these materials.

Ormond Simpson and Mary Brightwell: "Try it - you'll like it: Open University 'Taster' courses" (No. 24)

The Taster course was designed to give a taste of Open University work, and a short experience of what it might be like to be an O.U. student. There would be no failure, so students could experience the course materials, group tutorials, television and the other activities of an O.U. student in complete confidence. The course was aimed at people who wondered if the O.U. would suit them, but were unwilling to commit themselves to the application process because they had insufficient confidence in their abilities, insufficient knowledge of what was involved or were unsure of how it might meet their needs.

The article reports on 3 such courses, each of five two-hour sessions, describing who attended and the programme followed. The advantage over the group admission scheme is that a ready-made group is not essential, nor do students have to be interested in the same course.

(K)

OPEN UNIVERSITY CONTINUING EDUCATION

N.C. Farnes and R. McCormick: 'The educational well-being of the community generally' (No.6)

A significant feature of a system of continuing education is that the tutor has an active role in helping learners to articulate their needs and obtain appropriate materials.

Community education workers should be employed as part-time tutors responsible for contacting people, encouraging, supplying, and identifying local resources.

Roger Watkins: Counselling in Continuing Education (No.6)

An adult education counselling service must be INFORMED and PERSONAL. The article considers how the O.U. might better advise potential undergraduate students and also how to counsel applicants to non-degree courses.

It refers to Local Development Councils for Adult Education as proposed in Russell Report of 1973 and reports experiment in establishing such a Council in Yorkshire.

Most of the article deals with the organisation and dissemination of information about courses and activities offered by various agencies - more a system for responding to enquiries than counselling individuals. Is it possible to "help the enquirer to articulate his special needs through literature to be studied at home and then to offer a carefully prepared response either by letter or telephone"? He asks the question, does continuing counselling of non-degree continuing education learners depend on face-to-face meetings? He believes it is perhaps an appropriate time to ponder the extent to which letter, telephone and audio-tape could be used to replace face-to-face counselling. It could be argued that counselling at a distance is a natural and necessary development for an institution which teaches at a distance.

Stephen Murgatroyd: Counselling in Continuing Education (No.6)

This paper attempts to draw attention to the personality and growth potential of adult learning...and gives emphasis to the need for continuing education to be seen in the context of personal growth as well as work and leisure. Further it is suggested that there are available to teachers of adults insights about the potential use of teaching situations for personal growth, and that 'learning about oneself' need not be divorced from 'learning about a subject'.

This is a restatement of the counselling ideology. The Venables Report offers further evidence of the commitment of the Open University to the goals of the counselling movement. Not everyone has time or motivation to attend classes about self discovery so is it possible for more academic courses to have a self-discovery dimension? Calls on Rogers for his statement of counsellor characteristics i.e. empathy, genuiness and unconditional positive regard. These three facets of helping behaviour must be present in any constructive attempt to use face-to-face situations as a basis for developing the 'person' of the student. The conditions are so important to the success of a counselling service that they deserve constant repetition.

By providing a learning milieu based upon these core conditions, tutors can provide a basis for self-exploration and discovery.

Some staff may ask 'is it the task of the tutor to help his adult students towards personal development in this way? As argued by Beevers and Perraton, the O.U. is inevitably concerned with personal development and it should be recognised. "In considering the possible developments in continuing education during the coming triennium the role of counselling as a service and the counsellin ideology in teaching and decision making need to be carefully considered".

Michael Moore: Continuing Education and the Assessment of Learner Needs (No.17)

There is an institutional view of learning needs. The institution must ascertain what needs exist on a scale large enough to justify mass production of learning materials, and usually does this by consulting representatives of target populations. What is missing in the O.U's plans for continuing education is a sub-system between the institution and the general population, to help each individual to identify personal learning needs. This should be done by a counsellor helping the individual to analyse his present situation to identify which areas need change, and are amenable to change through learning and to plan a personal programme for achieving change. In a continuing education system for the 1980's we need a system for analysing individual needs on a large scale. This should be a system like that provided in the health sphere by the General Practitioner, who acts as a gatekeeper to the specialized sectors of the Health Service. The counsellor's role is to be accessible, and every adult should have access to such a counsellor. The learning G.P. need not have skills in any content area, but needs those of diagnosing, designing learning programmes, and knowing the resources for learning which are available locally and nationally.

Wyn Williams, Judith Calder, Michael Moore: Local Support Services in Continuing Education (No. 19)

Following Moore's article in T.A.A.D. 17, Williams argues that the O.U's Community Education Section of the Centre for Continuing Education has developed a programme which is more responsive to learner needs than the Moore article would lead us to anticipate. Collaboration with various agencies is described, and it is argued that the local co-ordinators who have been recruited from the Pre-School Playgroups Association and the Health Service constitute an embryo support system of the kind Moore proposed. Calder describes the range of informal uses of O.U. Continuing Education course materials, and interprets the implications of this for the proposal of a separate system of learning-needs counsellors. Examples of informal use are given, from Glasgow, Nottingham and Bournemouth. In these informal groups lies a learner-based system such as Moore advocates, and we should build on this, organizing on a regional basis University staff and volunteers to co-ordinate local activities. Moore accepts the view that a pool of potential helpers exists - the volunteers and informal users mentioned by Calder and Williams. There is a danger though that in using para-professionals or volunteers from collaborating agencies they will have neither time, interest or training to set aside commitment to their agency's programme and thoroughly explore the client's real needs. The Report "Links to Learning" is quoted in support of the need to train both professional counsellors as well as part-time and spare-time volunteers. Such counselling might be centred at Public Libraries. We have the embryo of a national system of counselling for Continuing Education. What is needed is enough money to bring together the various components and to train the persons concerned.

Pauline Kirk: Local support services in continuing education: new opportunities? (No. 21)

Following the articles in No. 19 by Williams, Calder and Moore, the author agrees with Calder that the O.U. should develop a local support system for continuing education which uses the existing network of local professional workers, volunteer co-ordinators and regional Open University staff. We have more resources available to us than Calder has mentioned. These are people who have not yet had contact with the O.U., but who are involved in networks of formal and informal provision of further education which we may link in to. To illustrate the suggestion, one particular type of network is analysed, that which caters for women who left the conventional education system without developing their full potential. This network, like others has both formal and informal components. Case studies are used to demonstrate how they can be woven together to meet local needs. It is concluded that the Open University's regional community education staff should play a more active role than seems to be suggested in any of the papers in No. 19.

John Payne: The Open University and Unemployment (No.23)

Kirk's ideas (No.21) about building networks seem to have more general application. In so far as unemployment can be defined as the absence of paid employment, work with the unemployed must involve liaison with industrialists and trade unions, job centres and unemployed workers' centres. The O.U. will need to work closely with formal and informal agencies concerned with changing social attitudes and values. This requires work at a local level, which implies a shift of resources from central to regional budgets. An O.U. policy on work with the unemployed makes little sense if the O.U. fails to make contact with the unemployed in local communities.

(L)

ADVISORY - REFERRAL SERVICES

Dorothy Eagleson: The Educational Guidance Service in Northern Ireland (No.9)

The Educational Guidance Service in Northern Ireland was established in 1967, sponsored by the Northern Ireland Council of Social Service and given grant aid by the Department of Education. The service is for all persons over nineteen years of age and it is staffed by one organiser/counsellor, one secretary/receptionist and one part-time psychologist. There is an office in the Belfast city centre. Clients are referred by various agencies, are seen by appointment and given an interview lasting up to an hour: usually there are several follow up interviews. Three to four hundred new clients are interviewed each year, and about a third are tested by the psychologist. Characteristics of the clients are given and an estimate of success is given.

Stephen Murgatroyd and Michael Redmond: Collaborative adult education counselling: models and practices (No.13)

A number of possible models for collaboration between adult education provides are examined, making use of a conceptual framework developed by Bernstein.

Model 1 is of a collaborative enterprise in which providers occasionally meet and discuss a restricted number of items but do not attempt to change the structure of their own institutions or seek comprehensive changes in the organization of adult education. Model 2 represents a form of collaboration in which the content of discussion is far more wide ranging than was the case in Model 1, but which nonetheless seeks to preserve the functional autonomy of each of the providers. Models 3 and 4 may be distinguished from each of these earlier models in so far as a reduction in the degree of functional autonomy afforded to each providing institution is seen as desirable. In Model 3, the extent of this reduction is over a narrow range of activities which might typically include publicity and admissions counselling. In Model 4 the reduction of functional autonomy is sought across a wide range of activities which might typically include administration, financing and staffing as well as decisions about courses to be offered in any particular session. These theoretical models are examined in relation to contemporary attempts at collaboration.

Adult education counselling in Wales, as in many other parts of the country is in its infancy, and in need of much development. A key feature of such developments must be collaboration.

Some developments in U.K. counselling services are described, including the services in Northern Ireland, Sheffield, Wales, Lancaster. These services are described with reference to the Models of collaboration, as well as to a theory of counselling (Hamblin), and recommendations are made for the further development of such services.

Anne Vickers and Joan Springall: Educational Guidance for Adults (No.16)

640 people contacted the Educational Guidance for Adults (EGA) Centre in Hatfield in its first year of operation. Their reasons are classified into: changes in life; career enhancement; leisure interests. There is evidence which shows that adults like these have difficulty locating information about courses and that they need advice and counselling support if they are to re-enter education successfully. It is hoped that the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education will take the lead in encouraging the development of a comprehensive network, building on local initiatives such as the E.G.A.

Linda Butler: The Educational Advisory Services Project (No.19)

Based in the Open University's Yorkshire Regional Office, the Educational Advisory Services Project has been in operation since October 1980, with the intention of giving practical help to all those involved in, or thinking of developing educational advice services for adult learners. These are services which provide educational information, advice and counselling "without reference to the recruitment needs of any one educational establishment". A number of these services have their centre of operation in a public library, and the British Library is funding a two-year research project to analyse the role of the library in the development of such services.

(M)

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

David Jackson
Vocational Counselling of Open University Applicants (No. 11)

The East Midlands Region of the OU initiated in 1976 a vocational counselling service for its applicants. The aim was to help them consider their career aspirations before commiting themselves to OU study. The scheme consisted of a self-diagnostic questionnaire and interviews with careers'officers. The article reports on progress after two years of the scheme's operation.

Paul Thomas: Conference on Adult Careers Guidance (No.19)

Report of the Institute of Careers'Officers conference of 1980, beginning with a review of the nature of adult development and how it should be considered in counselling for job change. This is followed by consideration of particular problems of women thinking about changing direction. Other topics were: An approach to counselling based on self-assessment, the importance of testing and assessment as a complement to counselling; a review of the availability of careers information; the need for counsellors to order their priorities to find enough time for counselling; the employer's point of view of guidance services; an examination of the present state of careers advice for adults and future developments.

Allan Last: Review of "Career Development in Britain" (No. 24)

The intention in reviewing the book was to encourage readers who might not normally think of themselves as being involved in careers education, to be drawn into the discussions and see something of the current research and argument in this field. The book links American theories with British data, and sets the discussion in a British context. The commentary on the book examines each chapter in turn, and highlights things that students should be learning at a distance if their development is to come more under their own control. The chapters cover: the concept of career development; approaches to occupational choice and career development; self-and occupational awareness; is career development motivated?; social structure and status in career development; ability, education and occupational functioning; career patterns; inner motivation versus external constraints; the usefulness of careers education; the implications of research for practice.

(N)

OPEN UNIVERSITY BRIEFING AND TRAINING

Ray Kennard: Briefing and training: a residential experiment (No.20)

A residential weekend was held for briefing and training tutor-counsellors and associate student counsellors. The programme included sessions on small group teaching, study skills, telephone counselling, role play exercises, face-to-face counselling and the "Great Study Centre Race Game". It is concluded that part-time staff valued the chance to talk together at length and the inter-faculty contact was seen as conducive to future study centre contact, as well as being instructive in terms of generally counselling activities.

(O)

COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL

Roger Mills: Student Support and Advisory Services in Distance and Adult Education (No.11)

Features of the student support services which feature in distance education systems - or which are suggested for such systems in a number of different countries are described, from accounts given at the 1975 ICCE Conference. Comparisons are made with Open University practice. Individual pre-enrolment counselling is important - preferably by specially trained consultants who represent no particular institution. Other ideas include: using O.U. graduates to encourage student interaction in local study groups as happens in the University of New England; greater local co-ordination of services; improved provision and flow of data about students for counsellors; better use of the telephone in "interventionist" counselling.

Jeremy Millard: Supporting Students in the Fernuniversität (No.22)

The East Midlands region of the Open University is compared with the Lower Saxony Co-operating Region of the Fernuniversität. Students in the former are supported by more local resources than the latter, but the nature of support in Saxony is such that it is doubtful whether it is simply the difference in amount of support that explains the much higher drop-out rate in Saxony. Some of the alternative explanations are the higher workload demanded of the Saxony students, the absence of course fees in Saxony - fee paying being seen as a motivating force - and the relationship between the centre and the region. This, the central-regional relationship is discussed at length. It is very critical of the tight central control in the German system, whose problems seem to result directly from the remote and unresponsive centre at Hagen within the context of little if any formal relationship between it and co-operating regions.

Torstein Rekkedal: Enhancing Student Progress in Norway (No.23)

The NKI enrolls 10,000 students annually, and is the second largest distance teaching institute in Norway. From 1970 to 1982 various research projects investigated student recruitment, achievement and discontinuation, and various tutoring techniques. Some findings are: The seasons of the year have an influence on discontinuation; and the level of previous education;age positively correlated with persistence; students who have been out of school for some time seem to be at a disadvantage; the main reasons for discontinuation seem to be related to circumstances outside the immediate control of NKI - such as 'lack of time', 'job required too much time' etc.

Jeremy Millard and Ken Giles: A Seminar on local support for distance students (No. 23)

A Seminar on local support for distance students in 1982 brought together representatives of institutions in six European countries as well as the O.U. The emphasis was on different ways of offering support and covered such subjects as: the characteristics and learning needs of adult students; recruitment advice and preparation for study; the role of student support in a distance learning system; tuition, counselling and study centres; designing the form and content of student support; student progress; supporting part-time staff; redefining the role of student support. It is hoped that papers from the Seminar will eventually appear as a Distance Education Research Group monograph.